



U.S. COAST GUARD



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CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER (CWO) SPECIALTY REVIEW

The Commandant recently approved a formal review of our CWO specialty structure. In February, we executed a contract with the Center of Naval Analyses (CNA) to conduct the study. This Flag Voice is to inform you about the objectives, timetable, and expected workload for participants.

Why review the CWO Corps?

Changes in mission, enlisted rating structures, and advancing technology require that we accomplish this review. The JRR changed enlisted rating flows into the CWO specialties, but did not address the CWO specialties themselves. Just as the JRR was chartered because of concerns about the evolution of ratings that operate and maintain electronics, similar changes have occurred within several CWO specialties. For instance, a Systems Directorate (G-S) 'quick look' of CWO billets showed that approximately 63% of CWO (COMMS) billets and 19% of CWO (ELC) billets have IT related responsibilities. Additionally, the Marine Safety and Security Directorate is concerned that their CWO workforce is not aligned to provide the master-level inspector skills that are required for mission accomplishment.

How will this be accomplished?

This month we will ask about 50 CWOs, E-8/9s, and LTs to inventory the tasks, tools, and knowledge that are relevant to their jobs. Using a web-based tool, this will take about six hours per individual. This six-hour session can be broken up into smaller time slots with no loss of data. Following this effort, a second tier of reviewers will add missing elements. This process requires about four hours. The 50 selected individuals will then be asked to take a second look at the results, spending another four hours. We have already identified and contacted the initial participants and most of their supervisors.

After this initial analysis, we will conduct a web-based census of all CWOs and a sampling of E-8/9s, and LTs. This second sampling should take about one and a half hours. Following the full census, a panel of experts will convene to review the data received and link this information to accomplishments and mission performance areas.

What will happen with the data?

An in-depth analysis will be done to determine the optimum CWO Specialty structure, to assess the impact of future requirements, to map career paths from the enlisted ranks into the Warrant Officer corps, to define the roles of CWOs in the organization, and to identify mission areas with the largest training gap.

While this is somewhat similar to the current occupational analysis and rating review process used for enlisted ratings, the software we will be employing provides the capability to be more accurate; to complete the review in much less time; and to most importantly, review work across various specialty areas.

What's the technology behind the review?

The web-based tool being used is called SkillsNet (<http://skillsnet.biz/>). SkillsNet will provide the ability to efficiently capture information about what warrant officers do, when they do it, and the skill and knowledge required to perform their important work for the service with minimal disruption to an already fully tasked workforce.

This new, web-based approach couples CNA expertise as a facilitator with lessons learned from JRR development and implementation. It is commercial software that was proved in similar reviews conducted for the Navy. All the information that we're using for this review is Coast Guard information.

When will the review be complete?

The expected completion date for this assessment is the end of October 2003. From there, recommendations will be made to the Commandant and implementation plans will be developed. While the time on task is significant, it is far less than what was required for the JRR.

This is an important effort whose time has arrived. The Warrant Officer corps has been and remains an important part of the service's workforce. Through this review we will set the course for future contributions and accomplishments.

For further information or to communicate with the Future Force staff about the CWO Specialty Review, contact the project officer, LT Phil Prather at 202-267-2468 or visit the Future Force web site at: <http://www.uscg.mil/ff21/>

Regards,

RADM Kenneth T. Venuto
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